



# U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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## *News Advisory*

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## **76 Percent of Small Business Owners Believe Employment Eligibility Verification System to Have Minimal or No Burden on Them**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) today released the results of their survey of thousands of their members that finds 76 percent saying that using an electronic employment eligibility verification system would be a “minimal burden” or “not a burden.” The most important provision of the House-passed immigration and border security legislation (H.R. 4437) addresses the job magnet that lures immigrants to the U.S. illegally. The House bill makes mandatory a system currently voluntary that allows employers to verify whether an employee is legally eligible to work. Critics of this provision have asserted that this system would hit small businesses the hardest.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.), the lead sponsor of H.R. 4437, applauded NFIB for undertaking this important survey and noted the significance of its findings for the Congressional debate on immigration reform. “For the first time we know definitively the views of small businessmen and women regarding immigration reform and border security. **The survey results are another encouraging sign that the House bill’s efforts to address the job magnet and prevent future illegal immigration are workable and not a burden to small business owners.** Small business owners believe, as do most Americans, that illegal immigration is a serious problem that must be addressed. This survey shows nearly 80 percent support increased penalties for the bad apple employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens.”

### **Highlights of the NFIB Survey on Immigration:**

- ✓ When asked whether they would consider it a burden to use an electronic employment eligibility verification system to ensure their employees were legal, 76% of small businesses said it would be a “minimal burden” or “not a burden.”
- ✓ Seventy-eight percent (78%) of employers surveyed support increased penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens.
- ✓ Over 90% of small-business owners believe illegal immigration is a problem, with 70% calling it a “serious” or “very serious” problem. Eighty-six percent (86%) say that immigration should be a “very high” or “high” priority for Congress.
- ✓ The primary reason small business owners see illegal immigration as a problem is the

cost to taxpayers for illegal immigrants (47%). Eighty-six percent (86%) of small business owners would deny illegal immigrants access to public support.

- ✓ A plurality of small-business owners (43%) say that too many legal immigrants are admitted each year, with 38% saying the number is about right. Only 14% say that we should increase legal immigration.
- ✓ About half of those surveyed said there should be no amnesty under any circumstances, but about 44% would support amnesty for illegal immigrants who are employed but not dependent on government assistance. Well over half (65%) do not favor offering amnesty even if a person can prove that they have lived in the U.S. three years or more.
- ✓ Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents support a guest worker program that would allow immigrants to work for a specified period of time and return home.

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